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MONTANA COMMITTEE FOR THE
HUMANITIES
NEWSLETTER

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MCH FUNDS FOURTEEN PROGRAMS

The Montana Committee for the Humanities has awarded grants totaling $47,805 to fourteen groups in Montana between October 1972 and March 1973.

The programs, which are funded by the MCH under a $155,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, are designed to foster community dialogues by bringing the humanities to bear on public policy issues. All projects are oriented to the Committee's theme for the 1972-1973 year, "Political Power in Montana."

Projects range from radio and television productions to community forums and include statewide, regional and local programs. Events which have already occurred in these programs have sparked a great deal of interest across the state. One response typifies participants' reactions: "The programs, which air at helping to stimulate and clarify thinking on many of the problems facing the state today, are a great public service . . . An informed citizenry is the basis for our democratic way of life."

Programs funded include:

People, Problems, Solutions: A Broadcast Public Affairs Ombudsman Service, KUFM, University of Montana Radio Station, Missoula. A continuing series of broadcast discussions on topics concerning political power at state and local levels.

Public Forum: Montana Coal and Energy Development, Public Forum, an ad hoc group, Helena. A two-day forum to discuss public policy issues in coal development in Montana.

The Genesis of Political Power in Montana, Cultural Improvement Committee, Bitterroot RC&D, Hamilton. A film/seminar series dealing with topics in the political history of Montana.

The Kootenais: Their Political Power in Northwest Montana? Kootenai Communications, Elmo. A ten-part radio series on the history of the Kootenai Tribe and on their role in the public policy decisions facing the citizens of northwest Montana.

Political Decisions in Montana: A Television Dialogue, Television Committee for Political Dialogue, Missoula. A four-part statewide television series designed to bring humanists into dialogue with experts and public officials on major policy decisions in Montana.

(continued on page 3)

Upcoming Events in the Montana Public Program in the Humanities

April

3—7:30 P.M., Daly School, Hamilton, "The Genesis of Political Power," Topic: Mining.

4-6—10:00 A.M., Student Union Building, MSU, Bozeman, "Women and Their Potential," Discussions and Films.

8—6:05 P.M. KOFI-Kalispell, "The Kootenais: Their Political Power in Northwest Montana," Topic: Political Rights.

14—9:30 A.M. Absalon Lounge, College of Great Falls, "The Wounded People," Seminar.

15—6:05 P.M. KOFI-Kalispell, "The Kootenais: Their Political Power in Northwest Montana," Topic: Elmo School.

22—6:05 P.M. KOFI-Kalispell, "The Kootenais: Their Political Power in Northwest Montana," Topic : Termination.

26—7:30 P.M. Daly School, Hamilton, "The Genesis of Political Power," Topic: Banking.

27—7:30 P.M. Montana Power Hospitality Room 224 S. B, Livingston, "Politics in Montana: A Historical Survey."

29—6:05 P.M. KOFI-Kalispell, "The Kootenais: Their Political Power in Northwest Montana."

May

2-4—Cultural Colonialism: "Writing in Montana," Missoula Panel Discussions.

4—7:30 P.M. Montana Power Hospitality Room, 224 S. B, Livingston, "Politics in Montana: A Historical Survey."

5—KFBB-TV, Great Falls, "Political Power and the Poor Person," Topic: The Status of Federally-Funded Poverty Programs.

10—7:30 P.M. Daly School, Hamilton "The Genesis of Political Power," Topic: War of Copper Kings.

11—7:30 P.M. Montana Power Hospitality Room, 224 S. B, Livingston, "Politics in Montana: A Historical Survey."

18—7:30 P.M. Montana Power Hospitality Room, 224 S. B, Livingston, "Politics in Montana: A Historical Survey."

24—7:30 P.M. Daly School, Hamilton "The Genesis of Political Power," Topic: Civil Rights.

25—7:30 P.M. Montana Power Hospitality Room, 224 S. B, Livingston, "Politics in Montana: A Historical Survey."

All events are open to the public.

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April 1973?
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The Humanities and the Public Interest

The NEH State-Based Program

Does a philosopher have something to say about problems of land use in Oregon? Is the public in Indiana interested in an historian's perspective on marriage and divorce laws? There is at least one group in each state that thinks so because each has mounted an ambitious statewide public humanities program centered, respectively, on the theme "Man and the Land" (Oregon) and "Government and the Family" (Indiana). And in each state this informal committee, made up of humanists (professional teachers and scholars in the humanities), educators and individuals broadly representative of the citizens of the state, is working hard to demonstrate that the philosopher and the historian —the humanist and his discipline—have much to contribute to discussions of public issues and that the public wants and needs to hear what they have to say.

Simply stated, the State-Based Program is an experiment to test the premise that the humanities can contribute to an understanding of contemporary public policy concerns. The program assumes that professional humanists can have useful discussion with the general public on issues that affect all Americans as citizens. It is one of several efforts which complement the Endowment's substantial and long-standing support for teaching and research in the humanities, in recognition of the two kinds of humanistic knowledge cited by Endowment Chairman Ronald S. Berman in his annual report to the President last year: "One is public and social, the other private and individual. One strives for the understanding and resolution of historical circumstances. The other respects the work of the mind precisely because that embodies our highest powers, because intelligence is a legitimate end in itself." He added that one hope of the Endowment was "to restore the humanities to the ethical center of a world dominated by technology."

That was the concept and it soon became a reality: at first in six States (Maine, Wyoming, Oregon, Missouri, Georgia and Oklahoma) and today in 40 States. The initial success of the program is a confirmation not only of the concept but, more basically, of the commitment of the State Committees and of the large and growing number of scholars and teachers serving on the Committees and involved in projects supported by them. These "professional humanists," while agreeing that their disciplines need not draw justification from any forced "relevance" to yesterday's headlines, are nevertheless convinced that the humanities offer a distinctive perspective—not answers so much as a special way of asking questions—that the sciences and other studies do not always readily afford. These humanists do not claim any monopoly on values, decency or right-thinking. But as careful students of value-positions taken by other people over centuries, they believe they can offer their fellow-citizens access to past human experience that may be useful in decisions about matters that concern the *whether* and *why* of things, rather than the *how*. That access means much more than "exposure" to culture and learning. It means furnishing the historical and philosophical context, supplying factual information about the assumptions that govern public policy discussion, raising the "prior question" that must be answered before the question of the moment can be. This is something more serious than just "holding forth" in knowledgeable fashion; it means a serious effort to fulfill the right of the people of a democracy to the *means* of arriving at informed judgment, as they decide the future course of the society.

To assure that the State Committee would have the latitude and autonomy needed to make grants closely responsive to this purpose, the Endowment grant comes with a minimum of strings: 1) the projects supported by the Committee aim at the adult, out-of-school population; 2) the disciplines of the humanities are centrally involved in the content of the project supported; 3) academic humanists are centrally involved in the planning and implementation of the project; 4) each funded project focuses on a public issue of real importance in the State; and 5) the Committee must develop a single program-theme to which all the funded projects in the State clearly relate.

Focus on a Public Issue

These few ground rules have not proved onerous and the rationale behind them has made good sense to the Committees. The program is not for students because so much other programming—by the Endowment and by other public and private agencies—is; this is a program for the taxpayers' own benefit; the humanities and the academic humanists must be involved (not to the exclusion of others) because the program is *about* the humanities and what they can contribute to public dialogue; the focus on a public issue is the characteristic that distinguishes the State-Based from other NEH public programs; and the State Committee is the fulcrum, on the grounds that issues important to a State can only be identified by the State as a whole. For this reason the Committee does not constitute yet another State organization or agency of State government to sponsor educational or cultural events. It is created from scratch with members drawn from various organizations and institutions, to be a catalyst and a coordinator not tied to any single institution or agency and therefore free to work with all institutions and organizations and to involve any of them —and any number of them—in effective cooperation.

Taken together, these ground rules add up to a common-sense precaution to avoid the fog and the swamp—the cloudy concept and the soggy sentiment —and stay on the subject. Beyond these requirements, the State-Based Program is in the hands of the State Committee—the able hands of dedicated teachers and administrators and of other citizens, like the judge in Rhode Island, the Mississippi shipbuilder, the president of an Alaskan labor federation, the tribal president of the Rosebud Sioux in South Dakota, the Nevada newspaper publisher, the head of a large Hawaiian corporation, etc. Experience to date shows that citizens willing to go through as much toil as a well-run State program entails really care about the humanities . . . and really don't believe that democracy can operate by default.

Reprinted from NEH newsletter 2:6, December 1972.

THE FIRST YEAR PROGRAM OF THE MCH

The MCH began its work in March 1972 through a planning grant from the National Endowment. Throughout the summer of 1972 the Committee held a series of five planning conferences in Great Falls, Sidney, Billings, Butte and Kalispell to make the program known and to solicit ideas about a possible theme. On the basis of the concerns and ideas elicited in these sessions, the theme "Political Power in Montana" was chosen for the 1972-73 year.

In October, 1972, the Committee received a grant of $155,000 from the National Endowment for its first year of operation. A statewide conference in Helena entitled, "Political Power and Human Values in Montana" began the year's activities in December with two days of intensive discussions among the more than 200 participants. Keynote speakers, Mr. Louis Lundborg, former Chairman of the Board of the Bank of America, and U. S. Senator Fred Harris, highlighted the conference, and a series of panels involving academic humanists, professionals and public officials sparked animated discussions on the exercise of political power in economics, the environment, education, the Indian community, women's groups, the mass media and the legal system.

Since December, the Committee has entertained applications for grants from groups across the state to sponsor similar programs of dialogue in their own communities. Fourteen such programs have so far been funded by the Committee.

How the Application Process Works

Any non-profit group (including ad hoc groups) desiring to sponsor a program involving humanists and the public in dialogue on contemporary issues related to the theme of "Political Power in Montana" first fills out an application form supplied by the Committee. This is filed with the MCH Director by the 20th of the month in order to be considered by the Grants Subcommittee which meets near the end of each month.

If the application is approved by the Grants Subcommittee, it is then acted upon by the full Committee within the following two weeks. Given final approval, the project may receive funds immediately for the conduct of the program. After completion of the project, the sponsoring group submits a final report and evaluation to the Committee.

What Kinds of Projects Are Possible?

A project may consist of one session or be a year-long series. The format may range from small group discussions to major forums to radio and television programs. The basic model is that of the "town-meeting" setting, but a wide variety of programs are possible. Programs must include the basic elements of (1) open dialogue, (2) active involvement of professional humanists, (3) direct relationship to the theme "Political Power In Montana," and (4) concern with a public policy issue. Beyond these general criteria the program format is widely flexible.

Who Is The Committee?

The MCH is not a state or federal government agency, not a university group, nor a private foundation. It is a citizens group formed expressly to conduct the public humanities program in Montana under the NEH grant. The Chairman is President Robert Pantzer of the University of Montana and members include a librarian, a businessman, a rancher, a labor-union leader, university professors, a public official in education, a lawyer and a publisher. Members are drawn from across the state, representative of a wide variety of groups and geographic areas in Montana.

PROGRAMS FUNDED (continued from page 1)

Cultural Colonialism: Writing in Montana, Literary Group of Missoula Festival of the Arts. Panel discussions involving Eastern critics and local writers in dialogue on the exercise of power in the publishing world.

Political Power For Montana Indians—An Educational Approach, Montana United Scholarship Service, Inc., Great Falls. Programs involving humanists, local educators and Indian and non-Indian community members in dialogue on the relationship between the Indian community and the public school system.

Public Policy Issues in the Northern Plains Coal Resource Development, Rocky Mountain Mathematics Consortium, Missoula. Three panels designed to explore the humanistic side of issues involved in political decision making on the coal development question.

Politics in Montana: A Historical Survey, American Association of University Women-Park County Branch, Livingston. Five lecture-discussions focusing on the dynamics of political power throughout the history of Montana and on the contemporary results of this development.

Political Power and the Poor Person, Montana State Low-Income Organization, Augusta and Great Falls, Three hour-long television discussions on KFBB-TV to deal with the poor in relation to federal agencies, welfare, and the penal system.

Who Governs? 1776 vs. 1973, Bozeman Bicentennial Commission. Three forums to compare the theory and practice of government in the revolutionary period with the contemporary situation.

The Wounded People, Montana Big Sky Chapter of American Women in Radio & TV, Great Falls. A day-long seminar on the history and culture of Montana Indians and on their relationship to the political community.

Women and Their Potential, Associated Women Students and Bozeman Feminists, Bozeman. A two-day conference on the role of women in society today and on fundamental questions of political activities, rights, and goals.

Montana Land Use Conference, Montana Land Use Conference Committee, Billings. A two-day conference on humanistic perspectives of the relationship between man and the land in America and on the exercise of political power in land use decisions.

The Director will be traveling throughout the state during April to discuss the MCH and possible projects. If you or your group would care to meet with him, please notify the Committee office.

FILMS, AUDIO-, AND VIDEO-TAPES AVAILABLE

A large number of requests have been received for copies of recordings of Committee-sponsored projects. The Committee has available the following:

1. Video-tapes (½" Sony) of the panels at the state conference: "The History of Power Relationships in Montana," "Political Power and the Environment," "Political Power and the Indian Community," "Political Power and Women's Status," "Political Power and the Media," "political Power and the Legal System," and speeches by Mr. Louis Lundborg and U. S. Sen. Fred Harris.
2. Audio-tapes (7" reel-to-reel) of ten-part radio series (one-half hour programs) on "The Kootenais: Their Political Power in Northwest Montana."
3. Audio-tapes (7" reel-to-reel) of five panels and speakers, Rep. John Melcher and Lt. Gov. Christiansen and Mr. Tom Gwynn on "Public Forum: Coal and Energy Development."
4. Audio-tapes (7" reel-to-reel) of panels featuring economist William Miernyk and Mr. Michael Williams on the human implications of coal development.

In addition, the Committee also expects to have available in the future 16 m.m. films of the four-part television series, "Political Decisions in Montana," and "A World Apart—Montana Hutterites;" a slide/sound presentation on the "Genesis of Political Power in Montana;" and other audio and visual recordings of Committee-sponsored projects.

SECOND YEAR'S THEME TO BE CONSIDERED

The Committee will soon be submitting a proposal to the NEH for its second year of operation. The theme **Political Power in Montana** may be continued for next year or another theme may be chosen. If you have a suggestion for continuation of the present theme or choice of a new one, please inform the Director as soon as possible.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you know of others who would care to receive this newsletter, or if you wish to have an application or further information on the Montana Committee for the Humanities, please write:

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